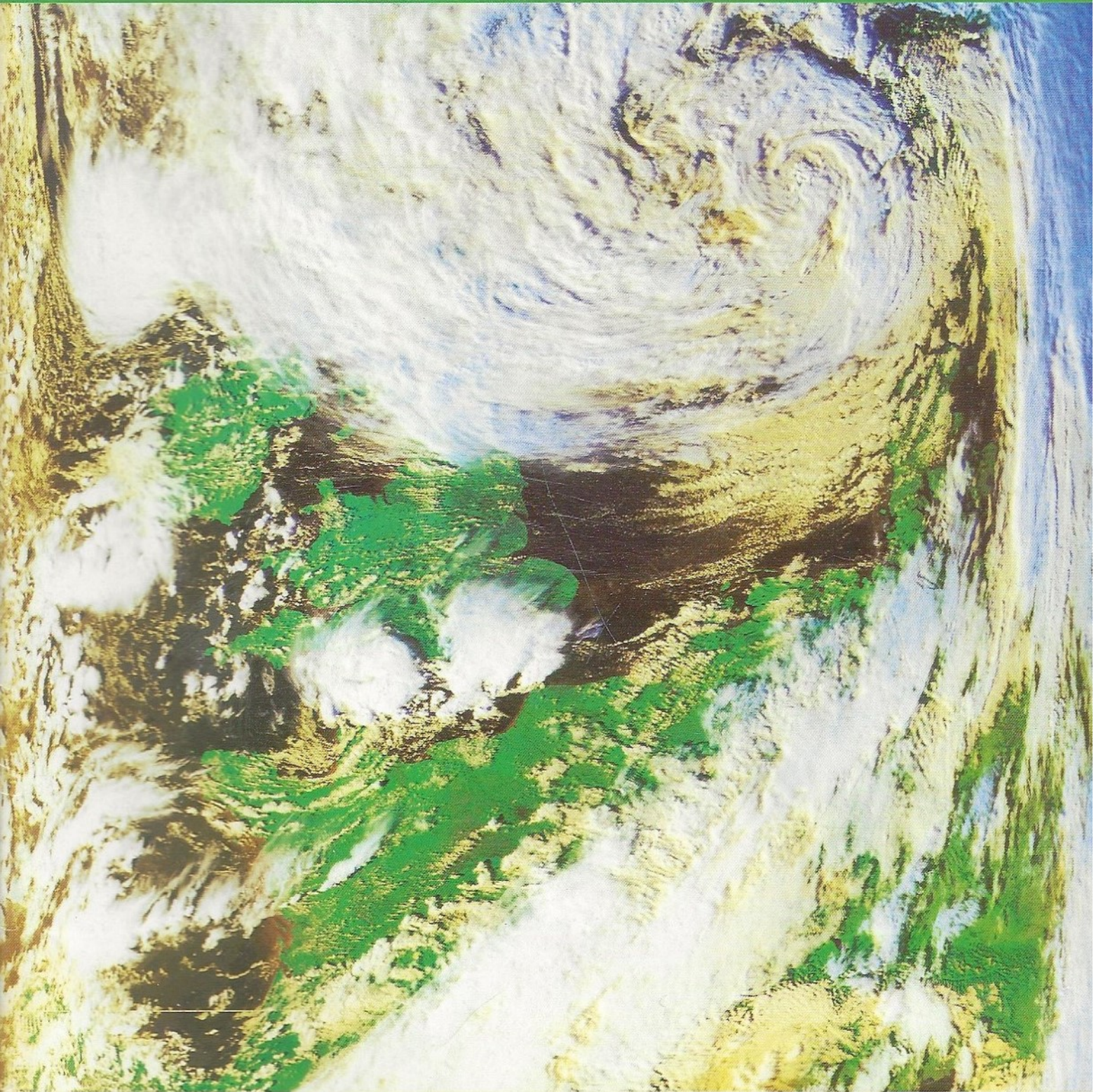




GIS Europe

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**PROBING
GLACIERS:**
the ice gives up
its secrets

**EARTH
OBSERVATION:**
satellites deliver
spectacular images

**IBM
FRANCE:**
le grand bleu moves
towards GIS

GIS can be applied to business problems. Ironically, perhaps, it is my own view that it will be received at least as eagerly by academics keen to obtain good source material about GIS applications as it will be by the potential business readers to whom it is primarily directed. I will be recommending the book with enthusiasm to both students and business colleagues alike.

Details: *Profiting from a Geographic Information System*, Edited by Gilbert H. Castle, III, 358 pp. \$49.95 plus \$12 postage and handling by Visa, MasterCard or international Postal Order from GIS World Inc, 155 E. Boardwalk Dr., Suite 250, Fort Collins, CO 80525, USA.

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GIS Videos: An annotated bibliography

REVIEWED BY SEPPE CASSETTARI

It is perhaps a measure of the excesses of the information revolution that anyone should prepare a 100-page-plus bibliography of videos on GIS and related areas.

As entertainment, the GIS video will not rival the wares of your local video shop. But a great need exists to increase general awareness of GIS, and the video is an excellent medium to achieve this.

Amy Ruggles' book provides a comprehensive listing of cost, format, source and length of each video. In most cases it also offers a detailed description. Content is linked to the subjects in the NCGIA Core Curriculum.

A number of the videos are taped conference sessions which will, I suspect, be of little interest to the mass

market. But there are a few gems, like *GIS in Qatar: Blending Old World Customs with New Technology* and *The GRASS Story*. They are not quite Oscar material, but for the educator and trainer they may well prove valuable tools.

Inevitably—considering the source of the bibliography—nearly all of the videos are from the US and are often only in the NTSC format generally used there. Unfortunately, only three videos listed have a clear European focus. There must be more videos that would be of greater value to readers of this magazine; perhaps suppliers could let the editor know.

Details: *GIS Videos: An annotated bibliography, Technical Report 92-9*. Compiled by Amy Ruggles, National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis, University of California, Santa Barbara, in cooperation with the American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (December 1992). Contact: Tel: +1 805 893 8224; Fax: +1 805 893 8617

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qualifications while still holding down regular jobs.

Presentations on setting up a GIS in the local government framework and in utilities followed using examples from Neuchâtel and Nyon, Switzerland, which emphasized many of the pitfalls of insufficient GIS knowledge at the start of a project. Tony Blunt of Baymont Technologies Inc, Clearwater, Florida, USA, discussed the operational problems of project management and quality control in data conversion. He emphasized that both areas are integral to the success or failure of a project. 'It is vital,' he said, 'to learn from mistakes made in the pilot project. Ignoring them can result in financial disaster.'

The Unisys conference brought together senior management from industry and GIS people in an environment conducive to communication. The senior industrialists learnt a great deal about GIS, and the GIS people learnt more about the needs of industry across Europe and the perceptions of a new technology in industry. I hope that over the next year, other vendors will set up similar meetings; they clearly benefit the industry and, I would imagine, increase sales by vendors. □

Vanessa V. Lawrence



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Intergraph seminar: a specific solution for generalizing maps

The coastal resort of Santa Margherita Ligure, Italy, a 40-minute train ride from Genoa, was the location for an Intergraph-hosted seminar on the day before the formal start of *EGIS '93*. The sun shone, the lunch was excellent and Intergraph's product launch was worthy of the setting.

The seminar introduced MGE Map Generalizer (MGMG), a new module in the MGE family. The product is designed to solve a good many of the problems that map producers face when they want to use scale-free geographical databases to generate cartographic products at a wide range of scales.

MGMG had its roots in the MAP2 project run jointly by the US Government and Intergraph in the early 1980s. Development of MGMG itself was begun in 1991, and it was launched in Europe last month.

Ambitious solutions

Map generalization is the most complex of cartographic problems, one that many have tried to solve. The most ambitious solutions involve knowledge-based approaches, but these remain largely theoretical.

MGMG is based on a conceptual model, termed 'amplified intelligence,' which entails a high level of interaction between the operator and the system. The operator imparts his or her own intelligence into the generalization process—which the system can repeat as required—but very little machine learning occurs.

This model is effective for focusing on the geometry of the maps but it does not help in providing generalization strategies at a broader contextual level. Even so, MGMG is a powerful generalization tool that will find enormous use.

The generalization process currently includes such operators as elimination by area, smoothing and simplifi-

cation, collapse, aggregation, extending boundaries, simplifying clusters (typification) and some aesthetic refinements. These processes, which constitute an extensive set of generalization tools, are shown in the information box. The user can also utilize many of the generalization parameters to set up repeatable generalization sequences for large areas. As a result, the product is fairly complex to use and has a busy interface.

Lack of tools

The biggest limitation in this first release of MGMG is the lack of tools for displacement of features and text management. The complexity of these problems is perhaps the reason they are not addressed.

MGMG is a major step forward for cartographic generalization and will greatly enhance the capabilities of MGE products. For many map producers it will provide a way of getting much more from their existing data without the need for redigitizing. □

Sepe Cassettari



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